



# NEWS RELEASE

*Office of the United States Attorney  
Western District of Louisiana*

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**For Immediate Release**  
**June 7, 2005**

## **IOWA, LOUISIANA, MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ILLEGAL FIREARM POSSESSION**

Lake Charles, Louisiana . . . **RONALD J. PINION**, age 37, from Iowa, Louisiana, pled guilty today to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon before United States District Judge Patricia Minaldi, announced United States Attorney Donald W. Washington and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Special Agent in Charge Mark Chait. PINION was indicted by a federal grand jury in April 2005.

According to court documents, agents of the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries received information in March 2005 that PINION had shot an alligator. The agents asked for and received oral voluntary consent to search

PINION's residence for alligator meat. While in the residence, the state agents observed three firearms in plain view.

Agents with the Lake Charles Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Task Force executed a search warrant in April 2005 at the defendant's residence and seized three firearms and ammunition. It is a federal crime for a convicted felon to have possession of firearms and/or ammunition. PINION has three prior felony convictions.

This case was prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office as part of Project Safe Neighborhoods. Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide program begun in 2001, and designed to reduce violence in our communities by aggressively using existing federal firearms laws. United States Attorneys, District Attorneys, Sheriffs, Police Chiefs, and state officials have created partnerships to address crimes involving firearms. Generally, any arrest involving a firearm is reviewed immediately by local, state and federal authorities to decide whether the case is best suited for prosecution under state or federal law, or a combination of both. Project Safe Neighborhoods is

expected to lead to longer prison terms for violent criminals, and a significant reduction in violent crime. To date, federal prosecutions under Project Safe Neighborhoods in the Western District of Louisiana have led to the incarceration of criminals responsible for violent crimes such as homicides, aggravated assaults, robbery, car jacking, burglary, and drug trafficking.

Sentencing is scheduled for September 2005. PINION faces a term of imprisonment of not more than 10 years, a fine of not more than \$250,000, and a term of supervised release of not less than three years.

Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. United States Sentencing Guidelines established by the United States Congress and the United States Sentencing Commission may only be used as guidelines by the judge. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

The investigation was conducted by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Department, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Lake Charles Task Force and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States

Attorney Larry J. Regan.

For further information, please contact United States Attorney Donald W. Washington at 337-262-6618 or First Assistant U.S. Attorney Bill Flanagan at 318-676-3600.

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